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Can Somalia be stabilized?

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On July 10, the armed attacks on two well-known hotels in the Somali capital Mogadishu led to the death of at least five people, raising concerns for the future stability of the country. The attack followed three attacks on 21, 24 and 26 of June, 2015, which killed at least 45 people. One of the two attacks was against the diplomatic mission of the UAE. What is the background of these attacks?

These events raise questions about the chances of stabilizing the war-torn country anytime in the near future. They are part of the armed conflict which has been going on for several years and are mainly caused by the Sunni Islamist guerrilla groups (led by al-Shabab), struggling to take control of the country. Their declared enemy is the internationally recognized government of Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. Moreover, the attacks raise concerns about the possibility of fuelling further instability to neighbouring African countries and the Arabian Peninsula, e.g. the bloody attacks of al-Shabab group inside Kenya and those of Al-Qaeda in the GCC countries. What does the international community do about the insecurity of Somalia? Not much.

Despite international efforts to achieve stability in the region, it is argued that there are some circles inside Saudi Arabia and Turkey that continue to support -obviously in a very covert way- the armed terrorist group al-Shabab. The role of Turkey, it is argued, is twofold and of duplicitous nature as well: Turkey remains one of the most important investors in this country of the Horn of Africa, and has financed hundreds of state infrastructure projects, such as roads, hospitals and luxury hotels.

In sum, this clash is part of a broader and not so obvious ongoing regional conflict, that of the Shiite-Sunni strife for prevalence in the broader Middle East. The destabilization of Yemen, just across the Straits of Aden, in combination with the crisis in Somalia are not good news for the prospect of making Somalia stable in the near future. By contrast it is expected that an unstable Yemen will contribute to the further deterioration of the situation in the Horn of Africa in the coming months.

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